The Cursed Paintbrush: Transformations

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When Sabrina gets painted by the Darigan Paintbrush, she had no idea that each time she felt weak, she would transform into her worst nightmares...! From Sabrina's POV. Finally UPDATED!

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Introduction
Darigan's Curse
Transformation into Vampire
The Doctor
Were Lupe Attack
Injection
Checkers!
Thaerin, Shadow Usul Thief
Illusen gets Trapped!
Supersitious Villiagers, Telephone Call
Top Secret!
The Beast Within, Fear
Facing the Beast, Suspicions at the Pool
Thaerin's Revenge Creation's rebellion

Darigan's Curse

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

"Hey, Sabrina!" yelled Paws as he bounced into my room, "Today is Half Price Day in Neopia, did you know that?"

"I certainly didn't! I think I have enough Neopoints (NPs) in my wallet for a special item… Maybe a squeaking toy plushie? Let's get everyone together and we'll shop!" I set down my pencil as I listened to my Kougra talk about the events of Neo-school and the Giant Omelette Day. I laughed at his cute little trick which involved balancing an asparagus on his nose. He was so CUTE!

More than three months ago, I was saved from the Crystal Palace of Priscilla by my Neopets, and almost had my soul taken away, so I was trying to forget the memories of the emptiness and coldness I had experienced… But they sometimes flooded back in a rush when I was busy with something important… I just wonder though, what would have happened if the *Coin of Fate* chose *Heads* instead of *Tails* ? No time to think about that! I had a special surprise for my Neopets!

I hugged Paws and my green Kougra didn't mind a bit, he purred! I smiled at him as I put a scrunched hair-band in my black Asian hair (and before you ask, I'm not Japanese, Chinese or an Indian) as I cleaned my thick glasses. "Parlrina, Mysteria! Want to go to the shops!" I called out to everyone.

Parlrina and Mysteria loped into the room and Kassiko dove into the room with a *whoosh!* "Hey!" I called out, "Don't do that!"

"Sorry, Sabrina… I guess I was so excited today!" squawked Kassiko the Lenny… Mysteria laughed a deep gruff chuckle as she watched the commotion in amusement. "Let's go down to see the sights!" yelled Parlrina as Kassiko played some pranks on the poor Rainbow

Wocky… Then she flew out the door by making a decent-sized hole in the middle of it! I sighed in contentment… Sure my Neopets may be a bit on the wild side, but I still love them no matter what!

Walking down to the Neopian shops was hard, but it was worth it! The entire bazaar was decorated for Half Price Day, colourful banners were flying gaily and every Neopian shop was filled with Neopians- all wanting to buy from the same stock! We had to literally push our way through the crowds!

"I wanted to buy that *The Falcon Lupe* comic book," sighed Mysteria, "But they're all sold out!"

"And what about the price of that Encyclopaedia!" shouted Paws as he was about to grab it, but then suddenly, another paw (puns) snatched it instead… "AWWW!"

' *CLOSED FOR RESTOCK- BACK IN EIGHTY (crossed out) EIGHT MINS!'* said the new sign on the Book Shop. Everybody, including my Neopets, groaned.

Two hours later, we came home empty-handed.

"This is hopeless," said Paws, "every shop we go to is either restocked or crowded! Even the Food Shop is out of food!"

"It's also ridiculous," shouted Parlrina as he preened himself using a comb borrowed from Paws. "How come every time we go to the shops, someone gets the item before WE do! And I sooo wanted that beauty treatment shampoo they gave out!" I was full out trying to calm my complaining Neopets.

"Don't worry, I'll think of SOMETHING…" I said to Kassiko…

"What about that Hidden Tower, the Faeries say they have in Faerie Land? Maybe they have Half Price Day too?" said Kassiko. I stared at her in amazement!

"Kassiko, you just saved my day! Up and away!" I said as we set out for the Hidden Tower…

" *Heh, heh, heh." said the Shadow Usul as she crept in the shadows. I did my work very well today…:-D She grinned as she searched for her next innocent victim and waited. Suddenly she saw movement as the Queen Fyora greeted her next customers to the Hidden Tower. The unused door creaked open with a shudder. Great! Another victim to prey on! The gold eyes contrasted against the black and purple fur as she grinned, white ivory fangs were bared against the darkness…*

" *I don't do loans, you know." Said Fyora as a red Lenny gaped at her, Fyora's eyes were bored, "What? Do you expect me to say anything different!"*

" *Er, sorry, your Majesty, some of my family would like to come to your Tower today!"*

" *Certainly, but be warned, don't touch anything in the Tower! You can look, but not touch them; they cost millions of Neopoints for me to buy!"*

" *Hey there Fyora… Wow, you look awesome today!" said a voice of softness. The Usul hesitated, was it prey or was it a friend? A young teenage girl with black Asian hair, short stature and glasses was talking to the Queen as the girl inspected each shelf briefly before moving on to the next item. Finally she rested her hands upon a Darigan paint-brush.*

" *How much does this cost?" she asked Fyora.*

"1.4 million NP." said the Faerie Queen.

"You GOT to be kidding about the price," muttered the teenager.

" *Nope, it's true!" smiled Fyora.*

Just then, a dark shadow leapt out! And it roared and hissed at me, fangs were shown. I screamed as it fastened its sharp teeth upon my fingers! It hurt a lot!

"OWWW! Get him off me!" I yelled as I dropped the Darigan paint brush in pain. Shimmering fresh purple paint splashed over my clothes, face and hands as the Shadow Usul kept gnawing at my fingers. Fyora managed to grab the Shadow Usul with her hands as Parlrina and Mysteria entered the room.

Meanwhile… In another world, Steph was playing on the *Neopets* website in the real world… When she got this message on the screen while exploring the Hidden Tower… She clicked on the Darigan paint-brush icon and got this ultra-special *Random Event* from Neopets!

RANDOM EVENT: You get Darigan Paintbrush! The Shadow Usul bites your hand and takes away half your life points!

"This is WEIRD," said Steph, "How come it says that on my screen! The computer mustn't be working then!" With a dismissive sigh, she progressed playing *Destruct-O-Match* on the computer, unaware of the things that were happening in the Neopian world at that moment(Lol! Ironic isn't it!)

"Oh my gosh; it's the Shadow Usul!" cried Mysteria as she saw the Darigan paint running down the Shadow Usul's face and paws. The black creature hissed at them through the globules of wet paint. Its look was so fierce that Kassiko was reminded of Priscilla's expressions when she was angry.

"It appears that Thaerin has bitten your owner..." said Fyora as she struggled to hold the dark-squirrel Usul. "And she has Darigan's paint all over her… That paint was designed to change a Neopet's appearance, but I'm not sure whether it has any effect on a human owner…"

I groaned, not only did Thaerin bite me; he had just ruined my entire day! And even worse, I also had purple Darigan's paint all over myself… But Fyora said that there shouldn't be any side effects for me… But I was worried, what if the paint affected me in more ways than one? And what about that bite? It was looking like it was caused to burn my skin! When I went home, I washed myself in the shower and went to bed early… I didn't even have the strength to talk to my Neopets…

"Are you *sure* you're okay?" said a concerned Kassiko looking at me…

"I'm fine," I told her for the thousandth time, "What harm can a Paintbrush do?" Little did I know that both the paint and bite would change me, from the inside out…? I'm not sure, I feel kind of woozy right now, better put the pen away…

I woke up in the middle of the night, for some strange reason… My hand wouldn't stop stinging and my heart felt like it was pounding rapidly in my chest. "Uhh…" I said, "I can't get to sleep like this! There's got to be something I could do…" Suddenly, I felt like I was changing, I cried out in horror as I staggered to the bathroom mirror. Until I realised I haven't bought one for my Neohome yet…! *Duuhhh.* I thought uncharacteristically, *next time, buy a mirror!* Huh, even my thoughts were different…?

When I finally found a mirror, I stared at myself in shock! Gone was the pyjama I was wearing to bed, instead, I saw a girl who was altered to look… More evil than she really was… Purple clothes adorned my body and fingernails were polished… Purple dragon wings were fully opened as well… Red eyes, the colour of blood were set in an otherwise beautiful face… *Hey, I could get used to this… NOOOO!*

I stopped the thought in mid-thought (is there such a word?)… What had happened to me? The creature that I saw wasn't me at all… I looked like one of those Dark Faeries you often hear in Faerie Tales… What if someone saw me like this, especially my poor

Neopets? How would they react to this? Then the painful bite struck again and I fainted on the floor…

The next day…

"Sabrina, where are you?" shouted Parlrina as he looked into my room.

"I'm in here," I whimpered, would I find that I looked the same as last night? To my relief I was normal again… *Must have been a nightmare.* I decided, *but for how long…?*

Transformation into Vampire

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

"Are you okay? You don't seem yourself today," said my Rainbow Wocky.

"I'm fine, for your information," I snapped at him. "I just had the worst nightmare in the history of Neopia and then you look into my room. Really!" My poor Parlrina looked scared of me for a moment… I felt guilty shouting at him, but after last night's traumatic events I didn't even *want* to think what would happen the next time I changed… *Was it because of the bite or was it because of the Darigan paint brush? And why did I transform like that!* While I was thinking those frightening thoughts, Parlrina muttered something about my attitude changes…

"I only just wanted to check on you to see whether you're alright. I didn't mean to scare you," he said softly under his breath as he turned away from my face.

"And I didn't mean to shout at you either, Parlrina… I'm sorry about what I said." I gave him a big hug, but it didn't feel the same as it used to… Before the incident of the Shadow Usul and the Paintbrush, I felt warm and secure. Now however… I didn't, instead I felt cold and distant… I drew away from his touch quickly…

"I'll just make breakfast," I said as Parlrina hopped off the bed happily, blissfully unaware about the transformation that I experienced last night. I hoped that this would be the last time I would change my appearance…

"Did you manage to get a good night's sleep?" asked my clever Kougra, Paws.

"Not really, just a couple of really bad nightmares," I lied to him. I didn't want to see his face and tell him the truth, not yet anyway. Not until I learnt the full, true story of what has been happening to me… I picked up the *Neopian Times* and began to read the *Short Stories* section of the newspaper. I was hoping that my *Twist of Fate* story had entered into the Neopian newspaper… No such luck.

The doorbell rang as Sabsalinaishia (Laura) and aquachickrulz (Ella) entered the living room with all their Neopets.

"Hi guys!" I said to them flippantly. "How are you two today? Long time no see… The last time I saw you were when I was writing that Neopian articles on interviews with monsters over 2 years ago!"

"Yeah- and we nearly got chased by that Were-Lupe Lira!" agreed Sabsalinaishia.

"And got chomped on by Countess Von Roo!" laughed Ella, imitating the Count.

"So, what are you doing today?" I asked Sabsalinaishia. Sabsalinaishia waved her thick brown hair and giggled. Ella rolled her eyes. JakeM, Sabsalinaishia Gelert barked.

"What do you think? We're going to the Battle-dome! Aqua's going to cheer me on while I defeat this tough guy's Grarrl." said the dark blue Gelert.

"Want to come?" Aqua said cheerfully. I considered their offer. Normally I'll go with them, but… Not today I decided. Too risky, I could transform again…

"Not today… Listen guys, do you want to hear what happened in the Hidden Tower yesterday?" I ignored their requests.

"Yeah, what happened?" asked Sabsalinaishia and Aqua eagerly.

"The Shadow Usul bit me on the finger and I toppled over and got hit by a Darigan Paintbrush! It really hurts! Then Fyora had to prise him from my fingers…" I winced to emphasize to my best friends how painful it really was.

"Oooh, Sabrina… I think you should see a doctor about that…" said Sabsalinaishia.

"Yeah, I should," I said as I covered the finger with lots of little bandages… "Anyway, not that it hurts or anything…" I rubbed my left index finger.

"We've got to go now, see you next time. But tell us what happens later!"

"I will, as soon as I see the local doctor!" I felt a bit elated, but I didn't know why.

Maybe it was the fact that after two years, I saw my best friends again. Or maybe it was the fact that I didn't transform in front of my friends… Oh yeah, that *was* a relief! I thought to myself… I got to keep this under control until I can tell my friends and Neopets, but even I had to admit that it was a pretty dangerous idea!

I drank some chocolate milk, while my other Neopets scoffed the rest of the Pea and Carrot omelette down. Kassiko needed help with her Neopian history assignment before Neo-school started… It had a very long title: *Why the Maquarians of the Underwater Kingdom Fought the Curse of the Pirates…*

As usual I tried to help her attempt some of the easy parts, but for some reason, I wasn't feeling up to the task again. Maybe it was a fever, or maybe it was the bite-wound that I've received from the Shadow Usul…

"Um, Sabrina: what do I do here?" she screeched as she pointed to a question.

"You interview the person of course." I said tiredly as she scribbled down the answer with her pencil in her beak (how a Lenny managed to write before they invented pencils still eludes me). Later on, when my four Neopets were at their Neo-School, I had a headache and had to lie down in my darkened room again…

A vampire Grarrl stood over me, his fanged teeth were gleaming with fervour as his dark cloak of red covered me… I wanted to scream, but nobody could hear me cry out for help as he laughed. Soon blood ran down his chin mixed in with salivous drool, I tried to avoid his awful flaming eyes, but I couldn't…

My screaming woke me up as my wound prickled my skin with renewed agonizing pain as it grew more persistent… *NOT AGAIN!* I thought as my heart started to thud loudly in my ears, each beat signalling that I needed some more oxygen… I gasped for air, as the room spun around in circles and each minor change was accented by even more twinges of torturous pain. Eventually, I was released from the torment I had endured while I changed. The changing must had stopped…

What am I this time! Please don't let me be something horrible… AAHHH! No such luck! Instead, I had *no* reflection this time- because it was dark in my room… *Great, if I didn't know what I was, I might as well guess what I was before I changed…* Was I a beast? I touched my clothes, but I didn't feel any fur on my body. I sighed with exuberance- at least I didn't look like any strange breed of Neopet! Was I human? Sort of- but I knew I wasn't anymore. Did I have any big feet? I shuffled my feet… Nope. That'll do for now. Finally, what had happened to my teeth? To a complete aberration, I realised that I had fangs! *AAHH! I've turned into a vampire! This is NOT good news! I can't go out in the sun and have fun in the sun! Does that even make sense?* I felt hungry, but for what? I didn't watch any vampire or horror movies (because I got so scared, so I had no idea what vampires ate…) Do they drink coffee? I thought.

For some reason, my words were all jumbled up when I thought about things… First thing: I looked into my closet and put on LOTS

of sun-screen over my pale skin. Second: I found some sunglasses and a thick winter coat that I wore. Third: I found an umbrella which I could use. I didn't want to wear black because it looked stereotypical of most evil things- and if I wore black that would mean I was evil! So I chose a nice pink dress. Hopefully my friends wouldn't see me like this!

I went outside- the sun was shining brightly- to my relief I didn't fry to death because I had so much protection, it wouldn't matter anyway! People and Neopets ignored me as I walked outside- nobody seemed to have seen me. A Quiggle laughed as I waved at him in bright gloves. So good so far... Suddenly, I saw a flicker of shadow. I turned. Was it Thaerin? Maybe. Soon dusk fell…

I returned to my Neohome as darkness descended on me. But as I stood at the front door, a pretty Zafara girl talked to me naively. She didn't seem afraid of me.

"Hey, you look different today Sabrina…" Was it just me or did I want to do something to her? I shook my head quickly, avoiding her beautiful eyes.

"No, I'm not so changed." I said. Suddenly, I had the urge and I looked at her tender, juicy neck with lusting for her blood… *BLOOD! Oh no!* I tried to resist the awful feelings I had. Finally I managed it with: "Got to go!" I shut the door in her face as she walked away… "Arrgh, what is wrong with me today!" Finally, I discarded all my items into my closet and I felt the now familiar throbbing of the wound… Then I fell unconscious.

When I woke up, everyone had come home and I was back to normal once more.

"Never again," I muttered to myself as details of my previous nightmare caused me to shudder with horror… Paws stared at me in puzzlement. "Sabrina, what are you talking about?"

"Uh… I was talking about what lovely fur you have!" Secretly I wondered how long I could keep up this weird changing before anyone found out…

The Doctor

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

I decided to go to my local Neopian doctor ASAP (also known as the next morning)… Now, I might explain something critical to you readers… In Neopia, there are not just doctors and pharmacies for the Neopets, there are some clinics for human patients too, so it's divided equally between the staff members who work at the hospital…

So, I went to see Doctor Gertie (It's his real name in Neopia, so don't laugh, ok?).

"Hello Miss Diamond! I haven't seen you in a while," smiled Dr. Gertie the human doctor. (What? Did you expect him to be a Neopet like the others? You did!) He had short blond hair, blue friendly eyes and a doctor's white coat and a *Neopian Hospital* logo badge on his front pocket. He was also working at this huge computer on his desk and typing a medical report into his Microsoft Word file and working at his papers... And answering the fax, all at the same time! I laughed!

Dr. Gertie is a very nice and well-known doctor in the area and personally, I couldn't have found a better person to diagnose my problems…

"Yeah, long time no see." I answered politely, he likes politeness… He coughed once and told me to sit down on a comfortable cushioned chair made of wood.

"I've heard some rumours about you, Miss Diamond, and I would like to see whether they're true or not: One, were you bitten by a Usul?" I gulped…

"Yes, but it was a *Shadow Usul.* " I corrected him. His eyebrow went up.

"Hrrph," He made a strange sound with his throat that I couldn't understand.

" *What?"* I snapped at him, I didn't have time for this!

"It's just that I have a cold too…" He stared into my eyes… I shivered; he looked like he was studying me for an experiment… Then he turned back to his normal self… "Your heartbeart's slightly *irregular,"* he told me… How did he know that?

"I see, and what sort of Neopet paintbrush splattered paint on you?"

"A *Darigan* one," I said punctually as his eyebrow went up even more.

"Darigan! Oh no, this is not good news…" Dr. Gertie moaned as he shuffled his files about accidents profiles. "Look here, not many people have been splattered by paintbrushes, but I know that from looking at the files, not all of them survived…"

He showed me a sample, "This person called Eristandler got splattered by the Polka-dot paintbrush… What happened was he got the chicken pox- and died shortly afterwards." That sure didn't make my day! I shuddered in my seat.

"And this young girl got hit with an Island paintbrush and she couldn't stop dancing the Hawaiian hula until she died of old age…" continued the Doctor.

"Apparently the effects vary from person to person because of genetically unstable chromosomes… And the symptoms are wide-ranging too."

"Which means…? I can't cure myself?" I added, he sighed and told me to fill out a long form which listed the major symptoms. Which I

did… Two hours later, I completed the last symptom and handed it out to my Doctor Gertie. Of all the symptoms on my list, I ticked three of them.

" *Transformations, acute pain* and *irregular pulse.* Right…" He said as he read them out. "I'll prescribe some temporary measures to fix it until we can get you cured." Then he dragged out a huge jar of pills! And he told me it'll cost half of my Neopoints in my pocket. My mouth dropped open. "That's more than 1,000 NPs!" I told him, he seemed to be nonchalant about it… I gritted my teeth as I pressed each of the gold coins into his hands…

"Yes, but what can I do about it?" shrugged Dr. Gertie. I just stared at him until he continued working at his cramped and crowded papers on his desk.

"See you, Miss Diamond. I hope you don't transform into something ugly…" Doctor Gertie joked to me as I went up to leave. *Thanks a lot, that'll REALLY make my day!* I thought sarcastically and ironically, knowing fully well that his joke was mostly true for me… I didn't want him to see the expression on my face as I left the room… I had to lug the medicinal pills all the way to the bus stop, and even then, I had to hide it so people wouldn't think I was strange carrying pills around… Oh no, I forgot about my Neopets! When I arrived back home, everyone (all my four Neopets) were still asleep. But just before I slept, I took a pill just in case I transformed in my sleep like last time!

This ordeal went on for several weeks, but sometimes, I just plain forgot to take my medicinal pills and that's where all the trouble began again… To my dismay- and horror!

Were Lupe Attack

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

It was a fine afternoon when I sat down and had lunch- spaghetti- yum! Paws, my green Kougra waved hello, but this time I just hugged him. And felt that creepy feeling again… I couldn't shake the distant emotions off… Feeling discounted, I just let go of him… "Are you okay, Mum?" he asked me, his tiger-like face looked so worried for his owner, I felt sorry that Paws had to endure the secrets from me, but it was the only way he could have a normal life. Normal… What was normal?

"Yes, I'm fine Paws… Don't you worry about your dear Mum while you're at camp, will you? You'll get to see your friends! Sammy the Eyrie and Henry the Moehog!" I smiled at him and then Paws went to Parlrina's room to pack his bags.

I sat down to continue eating my lunch, but suddenly, I didn't want to eat my lunch anymore… *What was wrong? I know! I forgot to take my-* I couldn't finish the thought as I ran to the bathroom again- the first time in over two months since I felt like this. I felt agony as the pain coursed up my body- nerve wracking for me…!

" *ARRGH!"* I tried to grip the cupboard as the familiar symptoms started up again… The pain from the bite, the heartbeats… This time though, I bought a mirror to see what was happening to me… I was appalled as my appearance changed from human- to *beast!* Brown fur grew on my body like wildfire as once human hands changed into slashing black claws… I sprouted a bushy tail… *HANG ON!* I looked like one of those Were-Lupe/ Neopian werewolves!

My normal brown eyes had turned a gruesome colour, which was as green as glass… My fangs were now intact… *Very sharp,* I noted before I screamed again. My beautiful face was still human, but the rest looked like a Lupe's face… *Boy, how am I going to explain this*

to Mysteria when she gets home? But that didn't matter…! I needed food- and I needed it now! I leapt out the bathroom window- I was hardly in control of my new form! My scraggly claws kept getting in the way.

Meat, meat, meat… My thoughts were getting confused as my new formation took over my logic and reasoning. I was terrified- the last two times, I was able to control at least *part* of my thinking but this time I wasn't in control at all… Prey! I leapt and my coiled legs sprung like springs… *Hey, this is fun…* said the wild side of me…

Until I saw who was going my way! AHA! More food! But… *My friends!* Sabsalinaishia (Laura) and Aqua (Ella) were walking *my* way; they seemed to be talking about the day's events… And I tried to stop pouncing on them, but somehow, my human side wasn't in control and I opened my jagged mouth… *NO!* I shut it just in time as I missed my friends by an inch of them!

"What was that?" said Laura/Sabsalinaishia … Ella/Aqua saw the dazed look on my face and she recognized the beast I was, "It's- it's a Were-LUPE! RUN!" They started running away as my Lupe side just snapped and started chasing them like prey! *"RRRR!"* I growled wildly, before I tried to curb my urges and stopped in middle of the chase… "We have to tell Sabrina about this!" yelled Laura and Ella as they continued to turn away from me. Little did they know that *I* used to be Sabrina! Suddenly, the Shadow Usul appeared out of nowhere…

Injection

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

"Hello, *Sabrina."* Thaerin smiled. "Like being a Were-Lupe so far?" I was too tired to answer. I fainted on the footpath… When I woke up, I was human again… But where was I! It seemed like I was in a kind of dark laboratory. Thaerin watched me, with a satisfied, wicked grin. "I know what is happening to you… I'll have my new master, Hubrid Nox and the Lab Scorchio explains to you."

"I don't want anything to do with your plans," I told him. "Actually, can you let me go now? I feel so drained of my energy…"

"Yes," said Hubrid Nox, the evil blue Chia grinned with fangs, "But you need the Paintbrush antidote-" *That* got my attention. "Antidote? Why, didn't you know there was such a thing?" He leant closer to me, his foul breath stinking…

"I didn't know until now! Please, I don't want it…!" I begged him.

"And you'll keep transforming until you die… After all, you have only a few months more to live…" said the Mad-Scientist dragon Scorchio.

"MONTHS!" I was shocked… Was it true? They knew much more than me. But they were evil… Eviler than anyone else in Neopia…

"Yes, and if you keep transforming, you'll attack all your *friends…!* " snide Thaerin added, "And you don't want to do that… Do you? And your *darling* Neopets, what will they do if they find out your secrets?"

"They will help me overcome this curse," I said.

"NO!" laughed Hubrid… Then I slipped into unconsciousness…

" *HA!" said Hubrid, "She still believes in all those moral things! What a fool!"*

"Yeah, what do we do now, boss?" said the yellow Scorchio excitedly.

" *Administer the Hypathamine injection, so that the girl will experience even more painful changes and even faster morphing time. If she destroys Neopia in the process, then it'll be an easy victory for Hubrid when she transforms! HAHAHA!"*

" *And I, gracious sir?" Thaerin bowed. Hubrid Nox patted her on the head.*

" *You will return her back to her Neo-home." He uncorked a bottle of blood and sipped it, "Delicious," he remarked "O positive is my favourite beverage!" Then all three of them laughed darkly* .

When I woke up, my body hurt like it never did before, and my head was full of undescribed pain. "HEY!" I yelled at Thaerin the Shadow Usul, "I thought you were going to give me the antidote!"

"Never believe what villains tell you! We gave you the toxin!" laughed Thaerin.

"Will I die then?" I said in a cold voice… I didn't want to believe him; I still had a long life to live! I hated that Shadow Usul… I wished he would never return!

"No, in a couple of month's time, but soon you will feel the effects of the injection!" He danced around the carpet, his gold eyes flashing…

"WHY YOU-!" I yelled at him. But then he disappeared…

I was in a maze full of corridors which twisted and turned everywhere. I tried to escape, but I got trapped in a trap, where a huge Cobra Pet-pet was waiting for me, waiting to sink its fangs into

me… I screamed loudly, but the more I struggled, the more I got entangled in its sticky trap of silk!

Then, Sabsalinaishia and Aqua entered the living room a few minutes later.

"Sabrina, guess what? A Were-Lupe attacked us- *AAAHHH!"* Seeing the last of my painful transformation, they were stunned… A giant Cobrall- which was me- opened its fangs and hissed loudly at them… "Oh no," muttered Sabsalinaishia.

"Was that Sabrina just now! But *how?"* yelled Aqua… My friends had finally witnessed my terrifying transformation… And they also terrified me.

Checkers!

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

" *WHAT!"* Sabsalinaishia yelled, "You can transform but you didn't tell us!"

"It's not that… Please forgive me, but I think this Shadow Usul bite might have transformed me into my worst nightmares! I'm regretful I chased you two as a Were-Lupe and I'm sorry about not telling anyone about it, but I was so scared of myself! I couldn't even control myself in that form…!" I said truthfully…

"And what happened to you at the Hidden Tower? You seemed to have paint all over yourself… I could smell it from the last time I visited you," said Aqua.

"Yeah, that also happened, it was a Darigan's Paint-brush… The paint spilt over me and transformed me also… It changed me into what I am right now."

"But you know the Shadow Usul, that evil fiend, did something to me today by injecting something and now…" I just cried… It just wasn't fair; I didn't want to become something I wasn't every time I felt weak… Was crying a sign of weakness? I wasn't sure… "How can I look after my Neopets now?"

"I'm not sure, but we'll try to help you, Sabrina!" Sabsalinaishia cheered.

"You can count on us!" smiled Aqua as her blue Scorpachick waved at me…

"Even if I transformed in front of you, guys? (Not that I'll want to!)" I added quickly. My fate seemed very clear now…

"Uhhh… We'll figure it out later!" said Scorpachick, Aqua's blue Kacheek.

Aquachick stood up, "First thing, we'll have to find out what that Shadow Usul and Hubrid Nox injected you with…" Scorpachick cheered 'Yay!'

"But how can we do that?" said Laura… "We don't even know *what* it was!"

"Well, let's ask Illusen, the Meridell Earth Faerie! She's an expert on potions and medicines like that!" said Jdogsrox, Laura's green Lupe. Laura got up "I'll look after your Neopets for you if you like…"

"Sure!" I smiled, I was so glad I had such good friends…:-D

Meanwhile, Mysteria sneaked into the room! "Hi Aqua, Sabsalinaishia and Scorpachick!" My female Lupe always leapt when she saw me and it was no exception for today. Normally, I would have rubbed her furry belly like always, but I decided not to because of the pain I was experiencing at that moment.

"Hello there," said Sabsalinaishia, "Um; Mysteria… Your mum isn't feeling very well, so I'll have to look after you in the meantime. Is that okay? You can play with Jdogsrox and the others!" Mysteria beamed a bright shiny smile.

Hee-hee, Mysteria always looks so happy and she cheers me up when I see her smile! Hmm… I wonder how she'll react to Sabsalinaishia and Jdogsrox?

"REALLY! Wow, oh wow!" howled Mysteria, "We're going to play! What game shall we play?" she said to Jdogsrox.

"Checkers," said Jdogsrox. The smile dropped from Mysteria's face, she didn't even know how to play Checkers… Scorpachick giggled as she set up the board game and counters.

"How do you play Checkers?" Mysteria asked her friends.

"It's very easy; all you have to do is jump over the opponent's counters."

"Like this?" Mysteria hopped her counters over Jdogsrox's entire team!

"You don't have a clue, do you?" said Jdogsrox in total surprise!

"I'll teach you later," offered Scorpachick to Mysteria. "I've won against *him* several times in a row! And he's hopeless at winning anyway!"

" *Grrrr!* Take that comment back!" said Jdogsrox. Scorpachick just laughed.

"You're just jealous that female Neopets are better thinkers than male Neopets!"

As the three Neopets fought over the remaining Checker pieces, Aqua and I decided to visit Illusen straight away, maybe she had a cure for whatever was in the injection… Who knows…

"No, you have to-" stated Scorpa as we began to leave Laura behind at my Neohome…

"Play?" Mysteria's tail wagged hopefully as she held the Checker board in her mouth. She looked *so* happy at that moment that I was sad to leave her behind in Neopets Central!

Thaerin, Shadow Usul Thief

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

Much later in Meridell, Hubrid Nox smiled. So far, his experiments with those pathetic humans were going successfully. As for Illusen, well he'll take care of that Earth Faerie later! He laughed evilly as he melted into the shadows once more…

"Hey Illusen, are you in there?" said Aqua as the famous Earth Faerie, sat on her lovely tufted seat... I entered into Illusen's room shortly afterwards, unfortunately, the tiny wooden room was *waaayyy* too cramped for humans (it was especially designed for faeries and other beings.) I managed to squeeze in after Aqua. We had to leave Scorpachick outside standing, after all, two humans, a Kacheek and a Faerie would NOT even fit in Illusen's home! Aqua's head bumped against the ceiling and her back was squashing me to one of the fragile walls… *Oh dear…*

Illusen's glorious, leafy wings were taking up what little space that was left in the room… She seemed to be working on something complicated… Perhaps she was doing some kind of Earth Faerie magic? She laughed at the comical situation that we seemed to be in, but she helped us shrink down to *her* size to our relief…

"Why, hello there, Sabrina!" Illusen smiled, "How's it going, you haven't done any quests for me lately, how come?" She leant against a bookcase that was next to her.

"Er… It's a long story… Can it wait?" I answered impatiently… Then Aqua and I had to tell her the *entire* recount, right from the beginning!

"So can you help us?" Aqua ended the lengthly recount. Illusen turned a bright red… We waited for her reply. It seemed to take forever, but she managed to squeak out: "Do you mean that I'll have

to find out what's the cure for this toxin…?" She muttered something I couldn't understand, *"Jhudora…"* Illusen whispered with loathing…

"She'll have something to do with this toxin! Hubrid Nox always had a liking for her, but… That means I'll have to talk to her, and I haven't talked to her since… I saw her do something ghastly." Aqua listened patiently.

I however, was feeling faint and kind of weakened. I knew Jhudora always had a dislike for Illusen… But I was about to find out how much they hated each other!

"You'll *have* to talk to her, Illusen! She's our only hope!" I said.

" *No!* Well, okay, but only this once! Never again…!" yelled Illusen as she called on Jhudora using her powers. "Jhudora, it's me Illusen!" Jhudora's darkened face appeared. She was like a twin for Illusen, but her eyes glowed evilly!

" *You!"* spat out Jhudora when she saw Illusen's gentle face. "Haven't you and your sisters learnt never to interfere with my other affairs?"

("What affairs?" I whispered to Aqua, "does she have a boyfriend? Hee-hee!")

"Listen Jhudora, listen very carefully… Have you been asked to make a potion or a serum lately by Hubrix Nox?" shouted Illusen, her pretty face scowled at her.

"NO! I will *NOT* take any advice from your pathetic words, and anyway, do not say that *NAME!"* snarled Jhudora…

"He did however ask me to make a special *antidote,* but he didn't say what to put in it… But I do remember it was called Hypathamine. Its effects are slow-reacting and gradual, but it always creates pain, tears and death in the end... Unless you can find the remedy to the toxin first!"

"So the ingredients are secret, even to you?" I asked her.

"Yes it is… Anyway, I don't think Illusen *could* even make a decent effort to make the purifying potion! You have six months to live… Before it eventually *destroys* you! Mu-ha-ha-ha-ha!" Jhudora laughed a classic villain laugh as her face vanished into the background. Illusen gripped her fists tightly… Clearly the encounter with Jhudora had a clear effect on her…

"Illusen, are you alright?" asked Aqua, she seemed scared of Illusen now that the usually kind, gentle Earth Faerie was irritated by Jhudora's insults.

"So that dastardly Jhudora thinks I can't make the remedy! I'll show her!" Illusen yelled angrily as she prepared the ingredients and herbs... She told us to wander freely outside until the cure was ready… I refused… No thanks… I already walked all that way and I needed a rest, I told Illusen. She understood, thankfully!

I wouldn't know how to handle it if I had to walk around again… Aqua decided to keep a close eye on me… To my complete embarrassment! But then again, it *would* be safer…

After a while, we heard a sudden scream from outside! We investigated, but to our surprise, no one was there! Aqua's light blue Kacheek had vanished…

"Where's Scorpachick!" Aqua cried out as she came out. Then we heard an evil laugh as a shadowed figure leapt out of the grass, "HA, HA!" cried out Thaerin sliding swiftly across the grass in the other direction, "I've got the completed cure!"

"Stop, thief!" Illusen cried out as he snatched the potion from her hands in horror…

Illusen gets Trapped!

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

"After he!" yelled Aqua as Thaerin took off with the cure… Illusen tried to use her Staff on the Shadow Usul, but he just dodged them easily like in fast motion… He boomed with mirth as he sped away towards the Marketplace, the potion in his mouth. All three of us ran after him, but he was just too fast for us to catch up to!

"Oh no! These were the only ingredients I've got and I can't make another…" sighed Illusen with regret…

"We'll go after him," said Aqua quickly as I panted for breath… Running is hard work! Before I could say anything, Aqua took off towards the shops!

"Bye Illusen, I hope we can get the potion in time!" I said as the Earth Faerie waved gaily to me… She was so kind…

"I also hope you don't transform in the middle of running…" advised Illusen. *Oh yeah, I sort of forgot about that…* I thought. *I just wonder how my Neopets are.*

"Thanks anyway!" I added with a smile as I ran off to join with Aqua.

Heehee, thought Hubrid Nox, The plan was working perfectly… Now to get the Earth Faerie! The vampiric Chia grinned as he saw the two humans run off…Then with a flash, he disguised himself as a... Lupe! (The natural enemies of Chias)

Aqua was just ahead of me, but I had to pause for breath every couple of miles (How many kilometres is a mile?)… I'm not the athletic type you know! I ran past vegetables and local farms as Aqua tried to grab Thaerin, but he was sliding past her fingers like liquid soap. "You'll never get me at this rate," yelled Thaerin as he

glided past us like one of those ice-skaters at the rink. "We'll see about that!"

I lost track of how many times we tried to catch the sneaky Shadow Usul… 45 times… Or was it 48 times? Anyway, we were unsuccessful! Until Aqua grabbed his furry tail!

"AAHH!" yelled the Shadow Usul, he turned to ram Aqua in the ribs, but luckily he missed and landed near the Turmaculus, who was having an afternoon snooze.

"Zzzzzz…" snored the giant Pet-pet as many Neopians tried to wake him up.

Suddenly, Thaerin winked at us and just plain vanished… Aqua and I were defeated with this method, so we decided to walk back to Illusen's glade. But Illusen wasn't there when we returned! Instead, a large, dark blue Lupe sat in the middle of the room. He snarled at us as we backed away quickly to outside.

"This is weird, very weird…" Aqua said "I'm sure she *was* there a minute before."

"Where's Illusen!" I exclaimed. "She's gone!"

Meanwhile, underneath the Lupe… There was a secret trapdoor and Illusen was trapped inside in the cramped space… "Hello? Can anyone help me?" she yelled. Illusen remembered that a strange Lupe asked her whether he could do a quest and she obliged, but then the Lupe growled very fiercely at her… He also snapped his teeth at her. She was so surprised she lost her balance- and fell into the trapdoor that was not there previously… Unfortunately, she wasn't carrying any of her weapons or magic with her at the time…! She felt hopeless, how would anyone know she was in this air lock? Anyway, Faeries can't die… Illusen realised.

Aqua stared at me, I couldn't figure out why… Until I realised *why* she was!

"Sabrina…? Are you alright?" Aqua said… I stared at myself and suddenly felt the immense pain course through my body; I dropped to my knees… I looked at Aqua desperately, but she could do nothing to help me as I struggled to breathe. "Please, Aqua… Help," I managed before I transformed… Aqua was looking at me in fear… What did I become this time! Heart beating rapidly, I looked at myself… What I saw was… *AAAHHH!* I didn't want to admit it, but I looked like a monster from someone's worst nightmare! Or possibly *my* worst nightmare…!

Supersitious Villiagers, Telephone Call

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

Two months passed and the usually peaceful Meridell was in an uproar… Illusen was one of their most beloved icons for their country, and now that she had disappeared, the villagers started to blame each other… *Rather them than me,* I thought uncharacteristically. But then the situation stealthily got worse: the local Neopets started to link the frequent 'monster' sightings with the new owner in the village (Sabrina/me) and they were a very superstitious bunch…

The local Neopets started to attribute every single cause of disaster onto me! Personally, I never liked all this foolish talking they always whispered about… "The monster stole our berries;" they started to say, "Our Kaus won't milk," I just tried to tell them that it wasn't me that was causing the catastrophes, but they avoided me like the plague… *What did I do for them to hate me?* I sighed. Aqua helped me out, but I saw that the strain of losing her Kacheek was getting to her…

"Go away, monster…" A plain blue Ixi giggled, "Monsters aren't allowed here."

"Really," I said bitterly, "Am I a monster?" The Ixi shut up after that, but he spread the word to his friends… Word gets around quickly in Meridell, unfortunately…

Truth to be told, I soon found out that I could no longer predict when- or what- I would transform into next time… And the changes happened more frequently now- much harder for me to control… That fact terrified me, I tried the medicine I was prescribed by Dr. Gertie, but they either didn't work- or they soon lost their original effect… The Darigan paint-brush really *was* a curse- at least to me! Poor Aqua rang up Sabsalinaishia…

" *Hi Sabsalinaishia," said Aqua on the telephone.*

" *How's it going with Sabrina," whispered Sabsalinaishia, covering the mouthpiece so no Neopets at home can hear her conversation. "Did she find the cure yet?"*

" *No, and listen… The villagers are suspicious of us, Illusen is missing; we can't find her and the Shadow Usul took off with the potion! Worst of all, my little Scorpachick has also vanished! Oh, Laura, what do we do?"*

" *Yeah, I heard about Illusen on the news just now on Neo-TV. And I presume the N.T. press has been after you guys as well? I read an article about it…"*

" *Yes, the reporters have been chasing us around after they interviewed the villagers! They believe everything they've been told about us!" Just then there was a crash somewhere in the Neo-home and Sabsalinaishia tried to hang up…*

" *Got to go, El." said Sabsalinaishia quickly.*

" *No, Laura, wait!" cried Aqua… "There's something you need to tell us- Do you know where the Secret Laboratory is?"*

"Secret Laboratory?" Sabsalinaishia frowned on the other side.

Jdogsrox started yapping on the other side of the phone, the green Kougra-turned-Lupe was making it hard to hear…

" *What's going on?" Jdogsrox yelped, "I want to hear the talk!"*

("Yeah, me too!" chorused Mysteria none and Parlrina… Then JakeM joined in.)

" *Guys, just chill out!" yelled Sabsalinaishia at them. Ella winced to hear Laura shout, the voice was amplified on the phone!*

" *Yes, it's… North-East of Mystery Island." said Sabsalinaishia as she checked the map. "It shouldn't take you two THAT long to travel from Meridell…"*

" *Uhhh… Thanks for the info," Aqua replied…She'll tell Sabrina about her plans later…*

Top Secret!

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

"Sabrina, you should rest," Aqua said desperately, "I've already lost Scorpachick and I'm scared about losing you… Please?"

"I know, I know," I muttered as I sat down at a table, I had other things on my mind… Like where was Illusen's cure now? If it was stolen, what would happen to it? Would Hubrid Nox destroy it? Or would he lure us to our doom? And what about my poor Neopets…

Meanwhile, with Hubrid Nox at the Secret Lab…

" *Frisk468, tie up Illusen and Scorpachick…" said the heinous Chia as many others Neo-humans followed his orders. He cackled as Illusen stared with fury…*

"Yes Master!" said a flowing voice belonging to a half-mutated humanoid Koi. The human looked normal- except for the long frilly fins of the aquatic Neopet and her eyes were sparkling blue.

Illusen and Scorpachick struggled against their tightly bound bonds as the mechanical Lab Ray was positioned according to Hubrid's orders.

" *By next Sunday, if your friends don't arrive to save the day, then I will make sure both of your DNA are blended together to make the ultimate Earth Neo-Faerie!"*

" *You wouldn't!" yelled Illusen. She would NOT oblige to blend with a Kacheek!*

" *Yes, I would! After all, I'M a purely evil villain!" cackled Hubrid.*

Three weeks later…

"Why are we here, anyway?" I said, staring at the lush green scenery… Sparkling azure oceans surrounded the rain-drenched island as a group of multicoloured Peophins frolicked in the sea, neighing delightfully. Aqua sighed, brushing her wind-blown lightly browned hair to the side; she was dressed in a trendy leather jacket... We got off the ferry very briskly.

"Why do you *think* we are here? Sabsalinaishia told *me* about the Secret Laboratory and that's where Illusen and Scorpachick are supposed to be…" she retorted.

"Ella, if you get us lost or something on this island…" I was worried; it wasn't like my very best friend to be sarcastically commenting on my words every time. Was she up to something? Or was it just me thinking nonsense?

"Don't worry, what is the worst that could happen to us, here?" Aqua smiled.

"Hubrid Nox could capture us for one thing… Or we might fall prey to the wild beasts that inhabit this island, or we might starve- or I might transform- or…" I began the listing… About 20 minutes later, Aqua told me to keep quiet, or else!

"Well, should I? I'm your best friend remember?" I protested.

"Still, I think you should hold your tongue." said Aqua. I was shocked; it wasn't like her to say those words to me. Was she serious? Or was she joking? Suddenly, we heard a rustling in the bushes, we both froze in fear… Was it a wild Neopet? *Or something else?*

The green Neopet watched the two teenagers talk to each other while being in undercover… It ducked as one of them started yelling at the other. The emerald Neopet was scared of the voices…It reminded it of her captor's voices. One of them with brown hair seemed strange to her, the words were somewhat signified by her bizarre actions. The other girl with black hair and tiny glass object on her eyes…What was it? It hadn't seen humans for such a long

time… But to her, she sensed something wrong with the black-haired girl, but the Neopet didn't know…

"Rar!" said a fierce dragonish voice as the green Neopet revealed itself… I was freaked out, what was it? It… Was a cute emerald Shoryu! Aqua also jumped as the Shoryu shook her pointed head, her huge eyes glaring at us. Was it a wild one?

"Who… Are you?" Aqua prompted the scaly-dragon Neopet. It spoke in a high-pitched voice, which was very fast-paced... I could hardly understand its voice.

"My… Name… Is… Mariam586!" The green female Shoryu (I wasn't sure) squeaked. "I was taken from my original owner, Sunprincess816, by my captors…"

"What sort of captors? What did they look like?" asked Aqua…

"Scary!" Mariam586 said. I gave her a blank look, no description!

"It was dark, but I couldn't see… They looked somewhat like villains." The cute Shoryu continued to be talkative and a bit naïve. "And they had a laugh that sounded malicious, like they were planning something to do to me…"

Mariam586 shuddered with apprehensive fear in her eyes, "It was horrible in there, horrible. I could hear the heinous screeches of the captured Neopets and humans in my cage!" *Humans!* Either I was hearing things, or my ears must have being malfunctioning! Aqua's mouth was open in incredulity and revulsion. Mine was open too- I couldn't *believe* what I was hearing! *Were they being tortured in there?*

"Is it true? Are they really experimenting on those poor Neopets and humans!" cried Aqua, Mariam586 nodded meekly, her eyes looked downwards. Then she ran off, asking us to follow her trail of tiny dragonish footsteps- as quickly as possible!

"This way," said the little green Shoryu who was known as Mariam568… "I was kidnapped from my original owner and was about to be captured by the Secret Lab, but I just escaped from there and I know the way to go… Please, hurry!" She begged as her dragon wings took flight. "The Secret Lab has *them* everywhere! There's no escape for those who don't survive!"

Who are 'them'! I wanted to shout at the Shoryu, *What are they!* But she just shook her head and shushed us, she wouldn't tell us. *Just my luck!* Aqua's eyes glinted with the fear of the unknown… Mine did too… What was in there, anyway? A huge monster? Suddenly, I felt a familiar presence of something I knew well…

"We're in this together," Aqua told me, "We have no choice now," We then stepped into the dark, creepy jungle… Many eyes stared at us hungrily from the leaves.

The green Shoryu raced towards our destination, which was very hard for us to catch up to, due to the leafy green, strange vegetation surrounding us. I was afraid that someone or *something* would attack us from any direction- at anytime… I felt the back of my neck prickle with fear as we *finally* reached the Secret Laboratory! Nothing looked very special about it, other than the pipes and the buttons sticking out of the ordinary building. Mariam586 twiddled with the air-vent before Aqua and I also entered the space.

"Ta-da!" shouted Mariam568 in triumph, "Look! I made a big-sized hole!"

"Yes, Mariam" I said absent-mindedly. "It's very nice." It was then that I noticed that my palms were beginning to feel sweaty… *Was the toxin seeping in!* I would rather not think about it… I then felt a twinge of pain in my arm, it seemed to spread...

"Wow," exclaimed Aqua, "What is this place?" I looked around in bemusement at piles of paper in an otherwise empty metallic room. Aqua began to sort through the paper…

"It's where the Lab Scorchio keeps his all his top-secret files!" Mariam explained. I read the first draft quickly…

" *Experiment 536: Failure. Today, I made a breakthrough! If people and Neopets could be blended together using the Lab-Ray, why not also create the perfect Neo-human! Tried to blend a Chia and an African human male with some very nasty results…Got paid 3, 000 NPs for experiment by a Mr. Nox, who also applied injection of (unknown substance) to improve the effects."* A raised eyebrow was formed as I read on…

" *Experiment 667: Success! At last, I succeed in blending a Draik and a blonde human female's DNA together! It looked like the perfect candidate for Mr. Nox's army! It had blonde hair, purplish scales and a huge dragonish/humanoid body. Its eyes flashed like flames and the 'Draikan' tried to talk Neo-human! Got paid 6, 000 NPs for experiment by Mr. Nox, who used it for fighting…Other humans who opposed him."*

"How crass (ridiculous)!" yelled Mariam heatedly, "It's Nox's worst idea yet! Imagine- he used *my* ancestral species' DNA samples to fight other humans!"

"Yes, it sure is," exclaimed Aqua as she finished proofreading it. "It's so dense, it isn't even worth thinking about…!"

"Look! Another file!" said Mariam as she pointed at the pile of paper- then a piece of paper slid out from nowhere. The green Shoryu read the missing file aloud.

" *Experiment 4,392: Success! Found out that humans can be mutated by paintbrushes. Asked Thaerin to search out any victims… The subject got hit by a Darigan paint-brush! Ha, ha! The effects of the paintbrush include spontaneous transformations, dizzy spells, etc, etc…"*

"Sounds familiar…?" commented Aqua. I nodded tiredly. When was this going to end…?

Aqua let the top-secret documented Secret Laboratory files drop from her hands… We now knew the truth- and the source of everything down in the Secret Laboratory. This was their entire plan for destruction! We all heard the experimental army approaching closer to us, the sound of evil laughter echoing through the empty metal room…

"I'm not going to let them *do* this…" I said to myself, all worked up...

The Beast Within, Fear

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

"Please, whatever you do down there to Hubrid Nox in the Secret Laboratory, just don't do it!" Aqua pleaded, clutching my hand. "He might have an entire army with him! And you *know* that he's going to destroy anyone who opposes him!"

"Look, Aqua," I said, sweat running down my face in little rivulets. "I don't care about whatever happens to me now… Hubrid Nox and that Thaerin have set me and dozens of other Neopets and humans already like some kind of sick little experiment that they planned and I'm supposed to do nothing about it!" Aqua said nothing, but she nodded hopelessly. Normally, I would have listened to her, but the toxin was too far in for me to think properly… I glared at her angrily.

"What about Illusen and Scorpachick, how are they going to be found again, if he continues with that crazy plan of his- Mutant Neopets/humans? Lately, I noticed the constant changes had made my mind more animal than human… Does it matter if I'm about to die at their hands? They had taken away so many things away from me and you… They took away my normal life, our own choice, your Neopet…"

I continued shouting at her… "It *hurts* me to transform each time I'm weakened, it's my constant cause of distress- and I'm willing to *stop* him, whatever the cost might be… I won't let him do what he is going to do to millions of other Neopets and humans! I won't let them continue with this… I've got to face my fears, my nightmares…! And then, may the curse be lifted…" I muttered…

" *SABRINA,* no! Don't sacrifice yourself for this!" begged Aqua. She was terrified at what I said to her… *Either way, I am doomed…But I'm going to try and get the cure back!*

"Well, well," said Hubrid Nox, "Look what the Mewclops dragged in…" he said as he eyed me, the other half-human Neopets snickered at my appearance. I avoided them with a sullen gaze. "Why do you want to come here all by yourself...? You foolish owner!" I ignored Hubrid's haughty gaze as Scorpachick yelled for help.

"You've ruined my significance of living my life, you stole Aqua's Neopet (and Illusen with her) and worst of all *you took away my cure!* Now I would like them back."

"You dare to speak to Sir in that manner!" laughed Thaerin. His gold eyes gleamed most immorally. The Lab Scorchio also chuckled.

"Then why do you two work for Hubrid?" I wanted to know.

"Ha, so… If you would *really* like to know, Thaerin was a *normal* female Usul- before I transformed her with the Lab Ray… That was when the Secret Lab Ray was in its early stages, very dangerous back then… When *I* used it on Thaerin, it exploded and she transformed into *this* Shadow type- and works for Hubrid now."

" *She?"* I was shocked; I always thought Thaerin was a *he* .

"Thaerin is a *she.* " the Lab Scorchio laughed maniacally. "I however had different priorities… I need Neopoints and Hubrid gives me all the profits for all my Secret Lab Ray experiments!"

"By the way, *Sabrina..."* Hubrid's nasty mouth grew even wider… "Feeling the effects already?" I most certainly did, but I didn't want to admit it…! Cold sweat dripped down my face…

"Transforming makes your weak human body more susceptible to the toxin; I suggest you give up the fight, how about it…" Hubrid grinned… "With all that power, who needs friends?"

"You are seriously one twisted Chia," I told him, "Now, let my friends go!"

"What's the chance of that? Seize her!" Hubrid yelled. The army of the Neo-Humans surrounded me… One of them, a red Zafara/human teenager, grabbed me from behind. I should have realised this would had happened, it was inevitable. I closed my eyes… Maybe it was too late to save Illusen and Scorpa… *Not yet…* whispered my inner voice. *NOT YET!* I hardly noticed the painful changes from human to animal… And when I did, it didn't matter to me anymore…

" *SIR! She- she… transformed into an unknown creature!"* shouted Thaerin.

Meanwhile, back in the real world…

YOU HAVE A NEW BATTLEDOME CHALLENGER: Hubrid Nox!

"Cool!" said Steph in enthusiasm as she chose her Neopet to battle, but she was in for a huge shock… "Huh! What is that!" she said, looking at the screen in horror. Instead of her Neopet appearing in the battle, an unknown Beast was challenging Hubrid Nox and its stats said '5467/6000'! "How can that be? *Neopets* had gone weird again!" shouted Steph. She shook her head; mysterious things were happening on *Neopets* that were beyond her wildest dreams...

Back in the Secret Lab in Neopia…

My human mind seemed to switch off, to be replaced by an animalistic rage. I flexed my furry dark paws, the *beast* was in control now… This was good -at least to my advantage- because now I wasn't a 'weak' human anymore… The Neo-humans backed off in total terror. They wanted to protect their Master (Hubrid) but they were also on the defensive, their semi-fur and scales were puffed up. My form must have been fearsome for them to be so scared of me… No matter, I had a job to do… My no longer human eyes gleamed like wild fire, illuminating the darkness in the lab.

I crouched down on my sharp metallic claws; my scaly tail was like a long whip cracking as I pounced into the middle of the room where

the Potion was. But then Hubrid sent the Neo-humans to attack me! I charged at them full speed, racing… Racing, racing, like nothing else really mattered to me anymore… To the Neo-humans I must have been like a darkish blur, as I had to get to Illusen and Scorpachick! I ran ever-increasing circles around them, soon they were unsure about where or when to strike.

Pretty soon I sped to the machine in the centre of the Lab that controlled the DNA blending… Aqua's blue Kacheek and the Earth Faerie were already tied there by the ropes that bonded them together… Illusen struggled against the rough ropes.

"Help us! Are you Sabrina! You have changed…" said Scorpachick in fear… I gathered my human wits and nodded briefly. *Stay still,* I wanted to tell them. I raised my paws above them and brought it down as they cried out in horror- but my sharp metal claws set them free, the ropes were cut!

" *Destroy her!"*

One yellow Kougra/human girl was baring her claws as she slashed and bit into my left leg. It felt like several knifes against my fur. I shook her off like a pest. I showed my newly formed fangs at her and she whimpered. I fought off the rest but they kept coming, tossing weapons at me… It hurt my outer body; I felt pain as red blood ran down… But still I persisted; *Hubrid must pay for what he did to me…*

"If this does not stop her, nothing will!" shouted a teenage blue Zafara-boy as he produced a powerful staff, but I simply knocked it out of his semi-hands- and it just shattered on the floor. "I want my MUMMY!" he bawled as I ignored him. Another Neo-human blocked my path, but I pushed her aside and she sprawled on her back.

Hubrid watched in utter amazement as the beast approached him… I guess I totally surprised him with all that fighting! *ROWARRR!* I shouted a challenge as the beast in me eyed him, he was just a puny prey compared to the fierce predator…

"WHAT!" yelled Hubrid, "The ' *foolish* owner' is invincible!" He turned to the Lab Scorchio in fear, "Don't just stand there!" The Lab Scorchio gibbered…

"I would like to help, Master Nox, but it is technically impossible to beat her… The only thing that can stop her rampaging is… Give her what she wants!" The Shadow Usul, Thaerin nodded in assent.

" *NEVER!"* The egotistic Hubrid Nox yelled at his sensible servants. "I came so close to creating the ultimate army, then you two interfere! *YOU ARE BOTH FIRED!"* The mad, dark blue, fanged Chia held the cure in his paws laughing fanatically… Then he yelled as I picked him up and threw him as hard as I could.

The potion laid on the ground a couple of meters away as Hubrid lay unconscious. I stretched out my paws to grab the cure, but… *ARRRGGH!* The pain was unbearable as the toxin ravaged me, causing me to hold my head in anguish as I collapsed... It seemed like my mind was coming apart, the extreme pain as it coursed through my transformed body. Then I could remember no more as darkness came upon me… *My… Friends…* My last words lingered in my mind as I lay there in defeat…

The dark blue Chia opened his eyes… Who was he? What was he? He couldn't remember. Then a green Shoryu came up to him and told him that he was a good Neopet in his previous life- everybody loved him, and that he was the kindest Neopet that ever was… All Neopets and humans (including Lupes and half-breeds) were his friends- His true name was NobixDuhri! The clueless vampire Chia, now known as Nobix, thanked the Shoryu as he went on his way, making new friends in the world of Neopia! Nobix was never heard of again, vanishing into obscurity…

Authors Notes: What did you think of it so far? Is it the end! Or will Sabrina ever wake up again? Ifelt like crying when Iwrote this second last chapter because it was so melodramatic... ButI lightened it upabitwith a bit of humour! Please review!

Facing the Beast, Suspicions at the Pool

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformations

Author's Notes:

If any of you readers didn't know what has happened to Sabrina, I think you need to refer to the previous chapters... Lol, a lot has happened since last chapter (the last chapter had a cliff hanger ending) The beginning of this chapter focuses on Sabrina's surreal experiences with the Beast (it iskind of like an allegory- symbollical) But hold on for a roller-coaster into fear itself!

(evillish laughing is heard)

Since it was Friday the 13th last week, I decided to add an epilogue to the finale (The thirteenth chapter!) and supersition says that the number 13 is bad luck...! Or is it! Make up your mind after reading this chapter... And wait for the finale of all things supernatural in Neopia!

Oh, and before I go, I need some more reviews so I can see how many people actually like my stories! I love reviews from my readers! --

(end of the Author's notes)

Presenting... Chapter 12!

"Face your fear… Face your fear…" cried a voice, unknown. I could hardly see anything as I stumbled… Where was I? I was back to my human form, but wasn't I a beast a minute ago? And where did that form go? Darkness surrounded me like a cloak as I groped my way through… I was afraid at what might be waiting for me in the hidden night. Suddenly, I saw an intense glowing light from a gilded mirror and I stood in front of it… Was the mirror a way out! I hoped powerfully. The mirror nearly blinded me.

To my horror, I couldn't see my reflection, but something *worse* was in store in the depths of the mirror… The same darkened Beast (which I turned into at the Secret Lab) was waiting for me! It drooled and snarled at me with bloodied fangs bared, as I backed away, it was alive… And to my revulsion the beast spoke- with my voice, only the voice sounded more feral and fierce than ever before…

"What are you? What do you want with me?" I asked the Beast in the mirror. It laughed hoarsely, sounding like the hounds of Hell… Its voice screeched in my ears and filled me with utter despair. The creature spoke through its drool…

"I am your bane of life, your Curse itself! Ever since you touched that Darigan Paint-brush I was unleashed once again, darkest nightmares. I am able to turn you into your worst fears…! Say, how would YOU like it if I tortured you…? Only if you can tame me, you can get out of this place… TAME ME! TAME ME!" Then with a prolonged deep cry of immorality, it launched itself and passed through the mirror barrier, shattering the glass… The Beast then tackled me, its iron claws scraping my body… *"Behold, you are doomed…Sabrina… I had tortured many other 'innocent' people before you came, but I doubt that you will ever get out of this Curse…This is the ultimate end!"*

NO! I tried to push the animalistic entity off, but it was too powerful, trying to crush me within its paws… Then it occurred to me- if I could just say the Beast's true name maybe that could be enough to pacify the cursed animal's terror… So I looked the nightmarish Beast straight in the eyes…

"Your name is the *Dreadful Beast of Darigan* isn't it? I'm no longer afraid of you…!" I told it, a smile alighting on my face…

The Dreadful Beast's terrible blood-red eyes widened in shock… Then the beast howled in anger, its plain cry echoed sharply. *"You have solved it! How could you, a simple-minded girl like you from Neopia, unravel the Curse! No-one who has been cursed before you*

could ever defeat the Beast of Darigan! AAHH!" Then it muttered something and I fell unconscious at its will…

Somewhere near Faerie-Land…?

"Sabina!" Something was poured down my throat as I awakened to consciousness… I had a pounding headache and I struggled to focus… My wolfish Lupe was there… WHAT? Mysteria smiled at me… "Hi Mum!" Mysteria is here, but where are the rest of my Neopets! I shook my head; maybe I was still traumatized by my experience in the dark place…"Mysteria, how did you get here…?" I asked her, she didn't reply, but only smiled… It was sort of creepy, like she was… Not at all listening to a word I said…

"Are you sure you're listening?" Again, that vacant smile of hers... Then she laughed like it was all a joke. "I was just doing what Queen Fyora told me to do…"

"Which was…?" I said to my yellowish Lupe. Somehow, my own Neopet was freaking me out… Where were Aqua, Scorpachick and Illusen?

"I mustn't say, Mum… But I must tell you something, close your eyes… I'm going to put a blindfold on you…" Okayyy… Maybe she was just pulling my leg… Yeah, that was it… I felt the blindfold around my eyes as she tied ropes… Hey! This wasn't right… Why was she tying my hands as well! Was she afraid of me attacking her? Or was she simply following the Faerie Queen's instructions…?

"Now, take ten steps forward and then turn left, right again, left, straight on…"

I did as my Lupe told me, but suddenly I thought what if she was planning something…? Surely, she didn't want to hurt me- firstly, because she was MY Neopet… And secondary, what if my Lupe actually wanted to help me?

After about thirty minutes of this marching around, I started thinking about what she might be doing while she gave me the outlandish instructions… Was she right by my side? Or was she wandering off? I couldn't tell- because of the blindfold I had on… But I could hear that other people (or Neopets?) were cheering us on… Or were they doing the exact opposite?

If Mysteria was following Fyora's instructions, Fyora, Queen of the Faeries, would know when to tell her to stop doing what she was told… But if my Lupe wasn't following her directions properly, even the slightest mistake could end up in a disaster… Then just as I reached the final step, I took off the blindfold… And nearly fell into the water lapping my feet!

I glared at her, but she just shrugged with her blond, muscular, furry shoulders. "Can't be helped…" Mysteria said indifferently… I stared into her golden eyes. Was she hiding something from me? I should know; I had raised her ever since she was a tiny Lupe pup… But this time, her big, wolfish, friendly eyes told nothing, not even the slightest hint. I felt uncomfortable... I was sure the other Owners and Neopets were staring at us right now, at this strange unordained event… I was right, they were… But to my relief, I saw Illusen, Mariam568, Aquachickrulz (Ella) and Scorpachick in the crowds too…

"Mysteria! What sort of trick are you up to?" I yelled at my Lupe, I could feel my eyes burn with rage, they actually flashed scarlet… Without saying a word, Mysteria actually pushed me with her huge paws into the cold icy water- of the Rainbow Fountain… "Argh!" I lost my balance! Falling forwards, unable to support myself, I hit the mysterious waters with a SPLASH! The usually crystal clear water instantly turned a dark velvety purple…

Purple liquid surrounded me as I spluttered out fresh water, then the waters hit me with its extreme temperature… I could feel the Darigan paint-brush's power, which was controlling my emotions; lessen in the water as countless bubbles floated past my eyes and burst…

Eventually, I felt free of the curse that had bound me- since I was doomed to touch the Darigan's paint-brush!

The curse was finally vanquished! I was free of the Darigan paint-brush's evil influence. "It's chilly!" I cried out as Mysteria laughed with joy… She helped me out of the pool…

Then my other Neopets (including Paws!) joined me in a group's hug… And this time I did not feel distant and cold-hearted, instead I felt so much delight and laughter that I haven't actually felt in a long time… Parlrina the rainbow Wocky purred as I hugged his warm furry body… "It's good to have you back!" he said.

"Did you give me Illusen's potion back there," I asked Mysteria, my smiling Lupe nodded, holding up an empty bottle… Paws laughed, "At least we have the old Sabrina back!" He licked the trickling purple water off my face… I laughed, J

"Sorry about it Sabrina, but that is the only way you can finally get rid of *Darigan's Curse…"* shouted Isis, the Rainbow Fountain Faerie, sitting by the edge of the pool.

"Darigan's Curse?" I requested, the words sounded totally foreign, but the topic also interested me… What secrets did this ancient paint-brush hold?

"The Darigan's paint-brush was formed many eons ago by the malicious Lord Darigan who ruled over his people with an iron fist… Through this powerful instrument, the evil Lord brought out the worst in his minions, turning ordinary Neopets into living, breathing nightmares at his tyrannical will…But as an unforeseen consequence, what was also unleashed, was the Beast of Darigan…"

"Whoever, Neopet or human, touched the Darigan Paint-brush had to face the Beast 'within them' at some point, because the Beast had the ability to transform them into their worst nightmares and it could also distort the person/Neopet until it was driven mad… Many people

and Neopets had been tortured by the Curse that bound them until they drew their last breath… Including Lord Kass- the insane temporary ruler of Darigan, before the true Lord called Darigan came again."

"After the Meridell wars were over, Lord Darigan was restored to his senses- and he realized that the Paint-brush contained no good to ANY of the people he treated cruelly and with a final resolution, he put a hefty price on the Paint-brush and shut it up in the Hidden tower so it could do no Neopians any harm… But still, even after all those precautions, the innocent Neopians got affected every year…"

Isis paused, "Even one drop of the Paintbrush can change any Neopian's outlook on life forever… You were one of the lucky ones, other Neopians before you weren't so fortunate…" A nasty thought came to me… What *did* happen to the rest?

"You mean those people…" Isis nodded sadly… I avoided her calm eyes; I knew the truth about those poor Neopians, I didn't need to be told about their fate…

"They fell at the hands of the Beast that they couldn't control…" Isis concluded.

I shuddered with relief… So now I was cured, finally the Beast couldn't transform me any longer! Illusen approached me; her eyes were wide and welcoming…

"I just want to thank you, Sabrina… Without your help, I could have been transformed to a half-faerie with the Secret Laboratory Ray…"

"No problem!" I answered Illusen, "By the way, how did you four (you, Scorpachick, Mariam586 and Aqua) get out of the Secret Lab- without being attacked by the half-humanoid Neopets or without your powers?" The Earth Faerie winked, "It's a secret, Sabrina!" Oh great, I might have to wait for the revelation…!

"And the other Neopets are fine?" Illusen smiled mysteriously… Then Mariam586's real owner actually turned up and took a pleased, squealing Mariam586 back home. "Mummy!" Mariam586 cried, Sun-princess smiled gently, "My little darling Shoryu! I missed you so much since your captors took you away!" Sun-princess squeezed her into a tight hug as Mariam586's other siblings joined her. "Mariam586! You're back! Yay!"

I looked at Aqua, the friend that worked so hard for me, finally hugging her prized Scorpachick and introducing a new addition to the family, a baby Xweetwok! I smiled, at least everyone was happy for now…

I was wiser now, but none the experience never the less altered my outlook on life, it had taught me to treat each and every day as a gift… I looked down at the Shadow Usul bite on my finger, I knew from now on, it would serve as a reminder of the day I conquered my own Curse… Kassiko looked at me, her Lenny plumage was shining since I last saw her…

"Shall we go home now?" I smiled at Kassiko, I appreciated her thoughtful aspects.

"Yes, lets." I smiled as all my Neopets started to walk with me, finally together… Forever… Or is it?

To be continued... In the finalEpilogue!

(don't you just *love* cliffhangers?)

Thaerin's Revenge Creation's rebellion

The Cursed Paintbrush- Transformation

Author's Notes: *Yes, this is it! The Thirteenth Chapter! Isit really bad luck for the villians?*

This chapter will answer all those unanswered questions such as: What happened to the Shadow Usul and the Scorchio Scientist after they are left after several months in the Secret Labortary? And who put them there? Or maybe not... evil laughing Anyway, Thaerin and Dr. Larrion are at the mercy of their horrifying creations... They better look out!

I was thinking, do you readers think I should submit this series to the Neopets newspaper (The Neopian Times)? And will you review this series? If so, thank you for enjoying the journey with me, and see you next time!

(End of Author's Notes)

Epilogue: Thaerin's Revenge

Thaerin growled as she stretched her shadowy body and yawned… Ever since all those last past months she had been stuck in the Secret Laboratory- with that insane scientist Scorchio gabbling about the wormholes and random stuff…She tried to get out of her small limited enclosure, but no amount of pushing could lodge her…

"That meddling Illusen! SHE'S the one that trapped us here!" the female Shadow Usul thought as her incompetent partner lent her… A screw."A SCREW! You must be off your nut! SCREW YOU!" Thaerin yelled angrilly. The scientist Neopet actually smirked toothily. The darkened Usul could see every little gap in his worn out teeth…!

"How about this little thing then?" The insane Scorchio handed the Shadow Usul a small laser ray gun… Thaerin smiled; at least that

nitwit was good for SOMETHING…

Aiming at the iron wall, she pulled the trigger of her ray… 'Tsssewwwww!' w*ent the ray-gun as it sliced through the metal wall, causing a medium sized hole… At last, freed from their captive, the two villains escaped from the room that contained them for so long… "We're free!" screamed Dr. Larillon as he cackled wildly…*

The scientiststumbled to a nearby machine, gasping in fresh air… Neopets can't die, but they also are eternally alive- unless they are attacked… There was a flash of blue and then suddenly… A blue Eyrie-human boy screamed vengeance as it lunged at him, claws ripping…

"You were our creator, but we are the destroyers… We are hungggrryyyy… We want foodddd… We want… Our revenge!"

The wailing cry went up as countless humanoid Neopets leapt on the renowned, insane Doctor Larillion… The abused experiments turned into ravaging creatures of a feeding frenzy…

" *Now all we have to do is find Sir and we can get out of here," muttered Thaerin as she searched around the abandoned laboratory…She slid like a shadow river, hunting for her master… But there was none to be found!*

The jet-black Usul's fur bristled with anger…Did that mysterious Beast take Hubrid Nox away? She remembered it just like yesterday… That Beast threw Hubrid against the wall, before stretching out to get the Potion, but just before it did, it shuddered and collapsed on the floor…

Just then, she paused… Wait, what was that noise? Then she remembered- the Neo-Humans were also here! What a fool she had been… In her excitement, she forgot the one thing that was important… The Neo-Humans would be hungry for fresh meat after all those months… And they were the prey… A cry came as the rest

of the Neo-humans feasted on fresh meat…Then they locked their eyes on the other prey- Thaerin.

But Thaerin wasn't just a Neopet, she was a Shadow. So, evading their attacks, she glided like a river of Darkness to the only exit…

Bright light stung her golden eyes as she breathed the jungle laden air… She will get her revenge all right… "An evil omen to the Beast and the Earth Faerie…!" She continued to laugh in a horribly sinister way as the sun went down…Bringing a ghastly night to the Island of the secluded Secret Lab.

The End